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ABSTRACT

A cogent model of self concept may provide educators with the tools to predict and induce change in the classroom behavior of students. The nature of measurement operations, management operations and particularly, the relationship between self concept and behavior are delineated. Discussion focuses on how such behaviors are acquired, manifested and modified by students, and how emotional correlates influence student behavior. The functional potential of self concept, and the organization of self descriptive/evaluative behavior are also explored. Self concept relates to other student behavior, and the development of self concept can be utilized positively by both the student and the educator. This formulated model of self concept implies that, if effectively used and reinforced, self concept can provide a student with the self-information he needs for decision making and self-directed changes in behavioral patterns. The educator, by utilizing well organized and approproate instructional methods, can play an essential role in the development of self concept skills in pupils. (PK)

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Self-concept: An Alternative View for Education

by Douglas Muller

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SELF-CONCEPT: AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW FOR EDUCATION

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New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico

by

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September 14, 1978

SELF-CONCEPT: AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW FOR EDUCATION

An increasing number of educators hold that self-concept is a fundamental factor influencing the outcome of the educational experience. Advocates of this position have traditionally defined self-concept as a perceptual phenomenon: the way the student sees or perceives himself. They propose that self-concept can be meaningfully used as a theoretical construct intervening between environment and behavior and, as such, provides a more parsimonious and complete account of human behavior. However, within the educational setting there is little direct empirical evidence demonstrating the practical value of self-concept in the prediction or management of student behavior. For example, empirical studies have failed to demonstrate that self-concept accounts for more than 34 percent of the variance in achievement scores (e.g., Brookover, Thomas and Paterson, 1964; Larned, 1978; Mintz and Muller, 1977; Muller, Chambliss and Wood, 1977; Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge, 1977). Further, several studies suggest that intelligence is as effective a predictor of academic achievement as is the combination of intelligence and self-concept (Mintz, 1975; Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge, 1977). Not only have researchers been unable to demonstrate the practical value of self-concept in the prediction of behavior, they have not demonstrated that induced changes in self-concept are followed by changes in classroom behavior.

Perhaps one reason for this lack of demonstrated construct utility is that most self-concept theory has evolved within the clinical context and serves the primary purpose of facilitating the therapists' understanding

and remediation of adjustment problems. Such theory may not be well suited for use within the educational setting. The purpose of this paper is to outline a model of self-concept which will have greater utility in this task.

In order for a theoretical construct to be of value in predicting behavior, measurement operations, as well as the relationships between the construct and behavior, must be clearly indicated. Additionally, the measurement operations must be independent of the behaviors being predicted. If the construct is to be used in the management of behavior, the relationships between controllable elements of the environment and the construct must also be specified. Traditional perceptual theories are couched in a language which makes a precise description of these operations and relationships extremely difficult.

In an effort to make the association between construct and measurement more direct, Muller and Leonetti (1973) operationalized self-concept as self-descriptive behavior. While this definition deviates from the perceptual tradition, it is consistent with the implied operational definition underlying most self-concept research. This paper seeks to elaborate upon this approach by developing a conceptual model which more precisely delineates the nature of measurement operations, management operations and relationships between self-concept and behavior. It then uses that model to describe the relevance of self-concept within the educational process.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Self-Concept

Self-concept is the individual's repertoire of self-descriptive behaviors. It is a set of behaviors rather than an internal process, state or quality. A person's self-concept is probably never completely knowable simply because it is not likely that all of his self-descriptive behaviors can be observed. The self-descriptive behavior of most verbal humans is extremely diverse and extensive; it is frequently covert and private; and sometimes changes as the situation or context changes. While self-concept is predominantly verbal, it may include various other forms of self-description. For example, pointing to one's own picture when asked, "Where are you?" is a self-descriptive act. Self-descriptive behavior is operant behavior and is subject to the principles of operant behavior.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the subset of self-descriptive behaviors which indicate self-valuation. Such statements may refer to the total self (I like myself) or to a specific self-quality (I dislike the way I play tennis). The self-valuative statement is not an evaluation of self or a self-quality. For example, "I am good" or "I have bad thoughts" are self-evaluative but not self-valuative. The individual is evaluating certain aspects of himself but he is not indicating how he values those characteristics. He may like his tendency to have bad thoughts or he may dislike the fact that he is good. The statements, "I like my bad thoughts" or "I dislike myself because I am good", are self-esteem statements; they indicate a valuation of self or self-quality.

Finally, self-esteem does not include the emotional response associated with a self-valuation or self-description. For example, a child who consistently fails may experience strong feelings of guilt or anxiety as he says, "I hate myself because I'm so stupid." That anxiety is not a part of the self-esteem or self-concept.

Emotional Correlates

The emotion associated with a self-description or self-valuation is the emotional correlate. In the above example, the anxiety experienced as the child describes his intellectual ability and his negative valuation of self is the emotional correlate. The term "emotional correlate" applies only to the emotion aroused directly by the self-description or self-valuation; it does not refer to the emotion experienced as a result of the quality itself. The above child could receive a math paper with an "F" written in red ink across the front. The emotion produced directly by the sight of the "F" would not be an emotional correlate. However, if the child put the paper in his desk, sighed, "I'm so stupid", and experienced anxiety or guilt as a result of the self-description, that stress would be an emotional correlate. Emotional correlates may be either negative or positive. For example, a child could describe herself as "good in science" and experience a pleasurable emotional reaction to the self-description. Emotional correlates are respondent behaviors and are subject to the principles governing respondent behaviors.

ACQUISITION AND MODIFICATION OF SELF-DESCRIPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Self-descriptive behaviors are acquired, maintained, altered, and eliminated in the same ways as other verbal behaviors. Such principles

as operant conditioning, extinction, punishment, imitation, verbal mediation, and transfer are directly applicable to these behaviors. For example, if a person overtly or covertly describes himself in a particular way and the description is followed by an operant reinforcer, that self-description is more likely to be repeated. A student may say, "I'm so stupid. I can't do anything right." The teacher might approach the child, put a hand on his shoulder and very supportively say, "Are you having a hard time with your work? Let me help you get started." The teacher's supportive attention may operantly reinforce the derogatory self-description. One of the effects of this is to increase the probability of the recurrance of that self-description.

Similarly, the principles of operant extinction or punishment have relevance. A student might say, "Wow, I turned in another perfect paper. That's really great!" The other students may not respond (extinction) or the teacher may say, "It's not polite to brag about your accomplishments" (mild punishment). In either case, that particular self-description is probably not as likely to recur.

Young children frequently imitate the verbal behaviors of significant adults. If father describes himself as "busy", the child may apply that same description to himself, irrespective of its validity. Father may actually reinforce the child for imitating "I'm busy."

Similarly, children are taught to repeat descriptions of self which are provided by others. For example, a three year old is asked by a stranger, "How old are you?" The child stares blankly. Mother says, "You're three." The child says, "I'm three." Mother and the stranger administer a variety of operant reinforcers. Or perhaps father says,

"You're a tough cowboy." Junior says, "I'm a tough cowboy." Father smiles and replies, "That's right, you're a tough cowboy." Two behaviors are being reinforced: the specific self-description (I'm three, I'm a tough cowboy) and the translation of the other-provided description of self into a self-description. The frequency with which the child is rewarded for this second behavior is tremendous. His tendency to translate or internalize others' assessment of his self-qualities may become habitual and may result in the indiscriminate internalizing of other-provided descriptions. This may yield a self-concept which is frequently inaccurate and easily altered by input from others (Sharp, 1977).

Children are regularly reinforced for describing themselves, regardless of the specific self-description. Typically, Junior is reinforced for exhibiting the phrase, "I'm a tough cowboy", as well as many other self-descriptions. In this way, the child's tendency to emit self-descriptive behaviors is increased. The frequency with which a person emits either overt or covert self-descriptions is related to the reinforcement schedule he has experienced relevant to these behaviors. An implication of this is that if a child is not reinforced for self-descriptive behavior, he will probably acquire few self-descriptive skills and consequently will have a restricted self-concept.

Certain self-descriptive or self-valuative behaviors may themselves provide reinforcement or punishment for their emission. A child may experience an emotional correlate when he emits a particular self-description. If that emotional response is pleasurable, it will tend to reinforce the emission of that response; if it is unpleasant, it will tend to result in the suppression of the response. Suppose an adolescent covertly describes himself as "bossy" and subsequently experiences guilt or anxiety.

The unpleasant emotional state is likely to function as a punisher for the response. Had the self-description resulted in a pleasant emotion, it may have strengthened the tendency to emit that self-description.

Certain self-descriptions may result in self-provided reinforcement but other-provided punishment; or self-provided punishment and other-provided reinforcement. For example, a ten year old may experience a positive emotion as he announces, "I'm very pretty", but may also receive considerable peer rejection. The child may learn to exhibit a covert, "I'm pretty", along with overt modesty. An older adolescent may dismiss an inept social behavior with, "Hey man, I'm always stoned." As a result, she may receive considerable peer attention (reinforcement), even though the self-description may actually induce guilt (punishment). The individual may experience approach-avoidance conflict regarding the emission of this behavior (Miller, 1959).

Self-descriptive or self-valuative behaviors, like other behaviors, are stimulus controlled. Consequently, the individual may learn to exhibit one self-description in one environment and a different self-description in another. These two descriptions could be quite similar or totally contradictory. When with her peers, the above adolescent may describe herself as "liking to always be stoned," but when with the school counselor, "worried about being a pot head." The self-description in this case is at least partly controlled by the stimulus qualities of the audience. Further, the individual may describe herself as "believing" each description at the time it is emitted.

On the other hand, the individual may acquire self-descriptive behaviors which are under the stimulus control of self-observed personal

traits. In order for this type of self-descriptive behavior to develop, the child must receive reinforcement contingent upon self-descriptive behavior which is consistent with exhibited self-traits. Recall the above situation in which the student said, "I'm so stupid! I can't do anything right." The teacher might better have responded in a neutral tone, "I haven't noticed that in you. How has your work been lately?". In this way, he would have avoided rewarding an inappropriate self-description and would have encouraged the student to reflect upon his past performance and to generate a more appropriate self-description. The teacher could then direct a short interchange in which the student is encouraged to continue to recall his performance and describe it appropriately. In doing this, the teacher could cue the self-observation/description process and provide reinforcement for appropriate behaviors. Finally, the teacher might say something to the effect, "Why were you feeling so discouraged about your work? Were you having difficulty?". The teacher could then help the student arrive at an accurate description of the problem that he had been experiencing.

ACQUISITION OF EMOTIONAL CORRELATES

Many self-descriptive or self-valuative behaviors arouse emotional responses. These emotions may be either pleasant (satisfaction, pride, joy, etc.) or unpleasant (anxiety, guilt, frustration, etc.) and are subject to the same principles as other respondent behaviors. Assume that a parent frequently tells a child, "you're a bad girl" and punishes her. Several things are likely to result. First, the child is likely to internalize that description. The child may in fact covertly verbalize the

internalized self-description immediately after it is presented to her. In that event, the phrases, "you're a bad girl" and "I'm a bad girl," are associated with punishment and both become conditioned stimuli for the arousal of anxiety. However, even if the phrase, "I'm a bad girl," was not covertly verbalized prior to punishment, it is quite similar to "you're a bad girl" and is very likely to arouse anxiety should it be emitted in the future. Thus, anxiety has in all likelihood become the emotional correlate to the self-description, "I'm a bad girl." On the other hand, suppose the girl is frequently told, "My, you're a good reader," and is hugged warmly. As a result, the self-description, "I'm a good reader," is likely to arouse a positive emotional correlate.

In the above examples, the emotional correlate was acquired through respondent conditioning; pairing a description of self with the emotion producing stimulus (punishment or affection). However, the emotional correlate may also be learned indirectly via a mediational chain. This process is illustrated in the following simplified example. John is a six year old. On several different occasions, an older brother says, "You're a creep," and hits John. The phrases, "You're a creep" and "I'm a creep," come to arouse anxiety. Some time later, in another context, John learns the verbal behavior, "Fat kids are creeps." Then, a critical incident occurs: a significant other says, "You're fat." John internalizes, "I'm fat." This may combine with, "Fat kids are creeps" to yield, "thus, I'm a creep", which in turn arouses the negative emotional response. If the child has had a history of being rewarded for repeating internalized descriptions of self, the phrase, "I'm fat", is likely to be repeated. If the mediational chain continues to operate, anxiety will be experienced with each repetition.

If John begins to receive comforting attention from parents, friends, or teachers following an "I'm fat" self-description, that behavior is even more likely to reappear. Suppose further, that the peer group begins to associate phrases such as "John's a fat creep" with social rejection, laughter or taunting. John is now in the unhappy position of being rewarded (comforted) by parents for saying, "I'm fat"; and having the negative emotional response associated with "I'm fat" consistently reinforced by the peer group.

Imagine now that as John reflects upon his play experiences, he frequently emits the chain of self-descriptive statements: "I play with the guys; I can't run as fast as the other guys; I'm fat; I'm a creep." Initially, only the last of these arouses anxiety as an emotional correlate, i.e., has become a CS for anxiety. Because of second order conditioning, the self-descriptions, "I play with the guys; I can't run as fast as the other guys; I'm fat", become somewhat more likely to arouse the emotional response of anxiety. If this chain of self-descriptions is repeatedly emitted and if the emotional correlate aroused by "I'm a creep" is strong, then the other self-descriptions in the chain will also come to arouse anxiety. That is, the child may learn to feel anxious when he merely says, "I play with the guys." Such learning can result in the child frequently experiencing feelings of uneasiness or stress.

QUALITIES OF THE FUNCTIONAL SELF-CONCEPT

Thus far, we have examined the nature of self-concept and the factors influencing it, but we have not indicated how the self-concept can be of functional utility to the individual. A functional self-concept is one which allows the individual to more effectively deal with his chosen

environment by facilitating decision making, providing a basis for self-directed change, and by minimizing the frequency and intensity of strong negative emotional correlates.

An individual's success at an endeavor is frequently influenced by certain of his characteristics and abilities. If he is to make reasonable decisions regarding such endeavors, he must utilize accurate self-descriptions of relevant characteristics. This may require that positiveness of self-description be adjusted in order to achieve accuracy. For example, the poor reader who describes himself as a very good reader may select books which are too difficult for him to read, or enroll in an advanced literature class and fail because he cannot do the work. The teacher's responsibility is to assist the student to develop self-descriptive behaviors which are in basic agreement with his demonstrated reading ability but at the same time do not arouse strong negative emotional correlates.

An essentially negative self-description can be couched in language which is not self-derogatory or overly negative. The self-description, "I'm having a hard time learning to read", is much more positive in tone than, "I'm so dumb I can barely learn to read." When the individual's self-descriptive behavior has a generally positive tone, it is less likely to arouse strong negative emotional correlates.

If the self-description should arouse a strong negative emotional correlate, then one or both of the following could result: the emission of the self-description could be suppressed and the individual would not have that self-descriptive information readily available during a decision making task; or the self-description could be emitted during decision making, and the induced stress could interfere with the individual's ability to perform the decision making task.

The self-concept should include an extensive array of self-descriptions which are relevant to the life situation of the individual. Those self-descriptions should be rather explicit. To say, "I'm dumb" is rather inexplicit; and to say, "I can read the words, but I sometimes can't remember what the story is about," is quite explicit. The functional self-concept should be under the stimulus control of self-observed, self-traits, and the individual should be able to describe himself in situationally or temporarily specific as well as general terms. For example, the student should be able to say, "Yesterday I studied my spelling words and I got almost all of them right on the test. But I usually don't study and I usually get low grades in spelling." These skills can enable the individual to recognize changes in his normal pattern of behavior and to direct those changes.

Finally, in order for the self-concept to be functional, it must be appropriately utilized. The ability to accurately describe relevant self-qualities does not guarantee that those self-descriptions will be used to moderate behavior. The utilization of self-descriptions is, in itself, a sophisticated, acquired skill.

ORGANIZATION OF SELF-DESCRIPTIVE BEHAVIORS

While the individual's set of self-descriptive and self-valuative statements cannot be observed in totality, self-concept and self-esteem can be estimated from samples of self-descriptive/valuative behaviors. In order to facilitate this, those samples should be organized and quantified in ways which maximize the relevance and utility of the estimate while minimizing its internal redundancy.

Muller and Leonetti (1974), Piers and Harris (1964), and Larned (1978) provide factor analytic evidence that self-descriptive behaviors, quantified in terms of positiveness, can be differentiated into identifiable, statistically independent factors. Larned (1978), Mintz and Muller (1977), and Muller, Chambliss and Wood (1977) demonstrated that academic achievement was most directly related to those area specific measures of self-concept which were reflective of school success. Chambliss, Muller, Hulnic and Wood (1978) provide additional support for a factor-specific organizational scheme by demonstrating that social popularity within a group of junior high students was most directly related to peer relations self-concept. Larned (1978) reports that the positiveness of self-concept in the various specific areas shows different developmental trends. Lane and Muller (1977) demonstrated that induced changes in the positiveness of academic self-concept do not result in changes in the positiveness of social or personal self-concept. Thus, self-concept appears to be most meaningfully organized into specific, independent areas or factors.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-CONCEPT TO OTHER BEHAVIORS

Self-concept is the individual's repertoire of self-descriptive behaviors. There is nothing in its essential nature which requires that a relationship between self-concept and other behaviors exist. Self-description may relate to other behaviors or it may not. If it does, it may do so for a number of reasons: the individual may have learned self-descriptions which actually describe his behavior, but do not influence it; he may have learned to moderate his behavior using his self-descriptions; or he may have learned self-descriptions which arouse emotional correlates

which in turn influence behavior. On the other hand, he may have learned self-descriptions which bear no relationship to his behavior.

A number of studies have reported a moderate relationship ($.2 \leq r \leq .6$) between self-concept and school achievement (Brookover, Thomas and Paterson, 1964; Larned, 1978; Mintz and Muller, 1977; Muller, Chambliss and Wood, 1977; Rubin, Dorle and Sandridge, 1977; and Piers and Harris, 1964). Each of these studies utilized a descriptive-research design and thus does not provide strong evidence that self-concept influences achievement. Mintz and Muller (1977) suggest that this relationship may simply reflect the abilities of students to describe their academic performances. Lane and Muller (1977), working with fifth graders, failed to find changes in achievement related classroom behaviors following induced increases in the positiveness of academic self-concept. Sharp (1977) reports that lowering the positiveness of foreign language aptitude self-concept by providing negative test results did not influence subsequent associative learning if that information was presented in a non-judgemental, supportive tone. However, when that information was given in a judgemental, non-supportive tone, subsequent learning was impaired. This impairment was probably due to the debilitating effects of induced stress rather than to self-concept itself. Taken together, these studies indicate a relationship between self-concept and achievement but fail to demonstrate that self-concept influences achievement.

Chambliss, Muller, Hulnick and Wood (1978) found a modest relationship between popularity and social self-concept of junior high school students but failed to find a relationship between accuracy of social self-concept and the ability to make accurate social judgements. Mayhall[1] compared

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[1]This research should be available as a doctoral dissertation from New Mexico State University. It is being conducted by William Mayhall and should be completed by May 1979.

fifth graders with accurate and inaccurate reading self-concepts. He failed to detect a difference in their abilities to select reading materials appropriate to their reading levels. Again, these studies fail to provide evidence of a strong pervasive relationship between self-concept and behavior. However, this failure is hardly surprising since individuals within our society receive relatively little direct systematic guidance in the formulation and utilization of functional self-concepts.

In fact, these results suggest that self-concepts of students may be largely nonfunctional. A functional self-concept would accurately reflect reality, would be used to make decisions, would be free of excessively strong negative emotional correlates which could interfere with the learning process, and would be derived or validated through self-observation. Further, the student should be able to use his self-concept to self-direct his behavior. For example, the student who is experiencing difficulties arising from the inappropriateness of his behavior should have sufficient self-descriptive skill to identify problem behaviors and recognize changes when they occur. In this way, he has a greater ability to manage his behavior. When the student is unable to monitor his behavior, it becomes largely dependent upon external controls. Adaptive or desirable change may then require extensive behavioral monitoring and intervention by the teacher.

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT

Larned (1978) examined the developmental trends of self-concept and self-esteem in students, grades one through nine. He examined the positiveness of self-concept and self-esteem in four school related areas: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success, and school adaptiveness. His results are summarized in Figures 1 through 4.

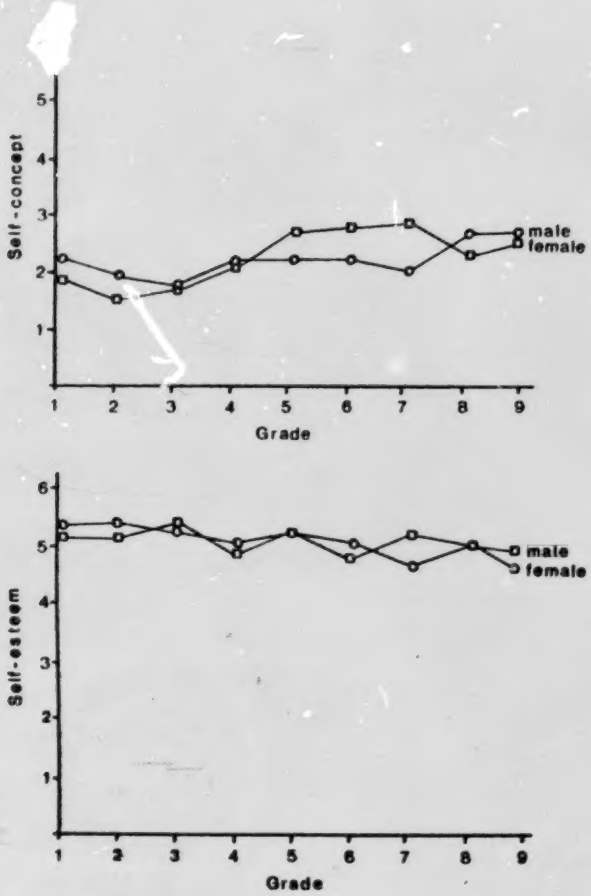


Figure 1. Mean Physical Maturity self-concept and self-esteem as a function of grade level.

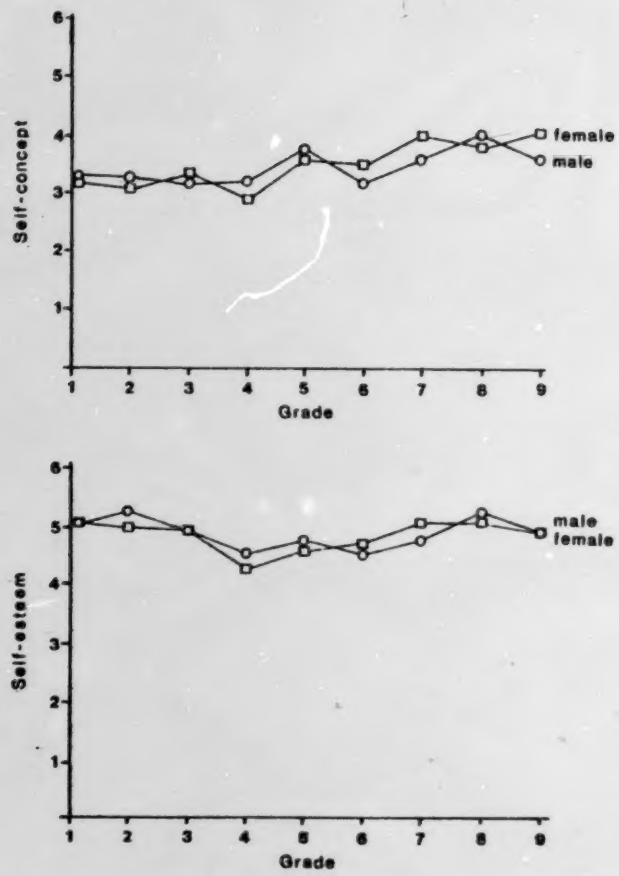
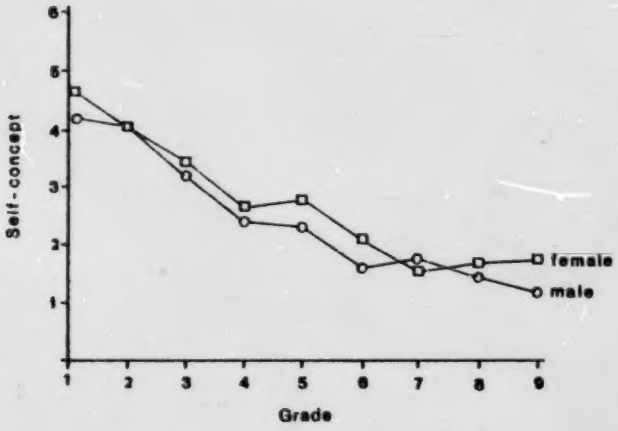


Figure 2. Mean Peer Relations self-concept and self-esteem as a function of grade level.



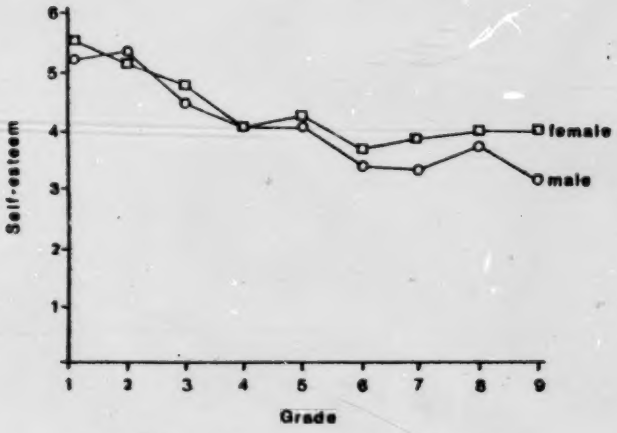
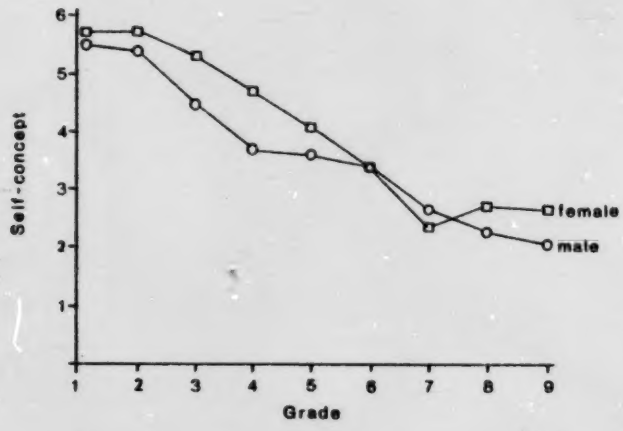


Figure 3. Mean Academic Success self-concept and self-esteem as a function of grade level.



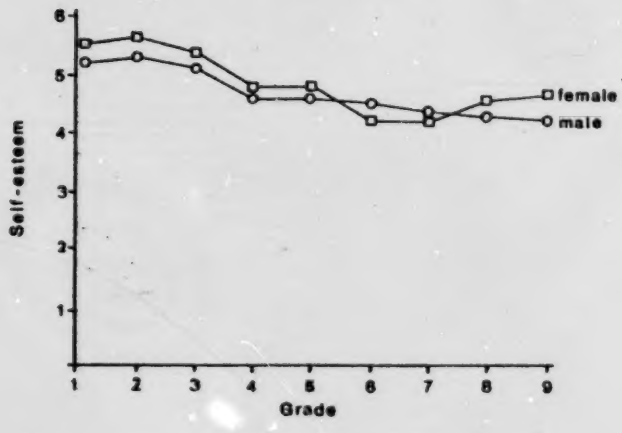


Figure 4. Mean School Adaptiveness self-concept and self-esteem as a function of grade level.

The developmental patterns for positiveness of self-concept and self-esteem differed according to area tested. The positiveness of physical maturity and peer relations self-measures remained relatively stable across grades. However, the positiveness of academic success and school adaptiveness self-measures displayed dramatic declines across grades. Physical maturity self-concept was the only measure to show different developmental patterns for males and females. These patterns appear to reflect physical size and growth rate differences between the two sexes. Small sex differences occurred in academic success self-concept, academic success self-esteem and school adaptiveness self-concept. However, the developmental trends for the two sexes on these scales seem to be approximately parallel.

The outstanding feature of these data is the dramatic decline in the positiveness of self-concept and self-esteem in the areas of academic success and school adaptiveness. It is interesting to speculate upon the impact of this decline on school performance. While many people have offered the view that low self-concept impedes classroom learning, there is virtually no direct empirical documentation of that phenomenon. Most research in the area of school performance and self-concept is descriptive in nature and cannot be taken as evidence that altering self-concept results in a change in classroom behavior. Sharp (1977), in an interesting laboratory experiment, used two techniques to lower the foreign language aptitude self-concepts of college students. When they lowered self-concept by presenting failure information in a supportive, accepting manner, subsequent learning task performance was not affected. However, when self-concept was lowered by presenting failure information in a judgemental, critical manner, subsequent learning was impaired. If the self-concepts of students are being

lowered through the critical, non-supportive presentation of excessive failure information, then their learning may be seriously impaired. Thus, the possibility that the observed decline in the positiveness of school related self-concept and self-esteem is seriously affecting school performance must be carefully considered, but cannot be regarded as established fact.

Larned also examined the development of the relationship between academic success self-concept and academic achievement. His results are summarized in Table 1. The strength of this relationship tends to increase with grade level.

Table 1.

Correlation Coefficients Between

Achievement and Academic Self-Concept

Grade	r
2	.29
3	.34
4	.38
5	.43
6	.58
7	.45
8	.56
9	.47

Mintz and Muller (1977) propose that the correlation between achievement and the positiveness of academic success self-concept can be interpreted as an index of relative accuracy of academic success self-concept. When the members of a group have accurate self-concepts, there should be a

substantial correlation between measures of positiveness of self-description of academic performance and academic achievement. However, this coefficient indicates relative rather than absolute accuracy. For example, if the positiveness of each self-concept within the group was incremented by the same fixed constant, then the absolute accuracies of the self-concepts and achievement would be unaffected.

Larned's results suggest that students frequently may not be able to accurately describe their academic performance. At best, only 34 percent of the variability in achievement was accounted for by variability in academic success self-concept. While this interpretation of results is tentative, it is interesting to note that students typically receive very little systematic assistance in developing accurate self-concepts. Perhaps this is something to be considered when one seeks to develop a meaningful self-concept intervention strategy. The results of Sharp (1977) indicate that self-concept could be lowered or raised to achieve self-descriptive accuracy without impeding learning so long as negative information was provided in a supportive fashion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

This model has a number of rather specific implications for education. First, it suggests that a functional self-concept provides the student with accurate, extensive self-information which can be used as the basis for academic, occupational and personal decision making, as well as self-directed change. However, it also asserts that the student must learn to use his self-concept effectively. In this regard, self-concepts are much like math concepts; the mastery of extensive math concepts has little observable

impact in the student's life if he has not learned how to apply those concepts to the solution of personally relevant problems.

This model recognizes self-concept as a teachable skill. The teacher can directly observe the nature of, and changes in, the overt self-descriptive behaviors of students, and respond directly to those behaviors. It is assumed that training directed at overt self-description can effectively influence covert self-description. Further, instruction in self-concept should seek to enhance the skills of describing self on the basis of self-observation rather than to teach the self-description directly. In order to effectively develop self-concept skills in students, the teacher must utilize well organized, systematic, direct and appropriate instructional procedures (Lane and Muller, 1977). This model strongly asserts that a simple, indirect, "affectively-warm climate" approach to self-concept enhancement is not likely to be effective (Backer, Wooden and Muller, 1977). Certainly a warm, supportive instructional environment is an important ingredient in effective education, but by itself does not result in the development of self-concept anymore than it does the development of reading skills.

This model proposes that self-concept is most usefully understood as a collection of self-descriptive behaviors which are meaningfully organized into independent areas or clusters. This suggests that the educator can concern himself with those areas of self-concept judged to be appropriate concerns for the educator (academic self-concept, school adaptiveness self-concept, etc.) and avoid those areas which are regarded as personal and beyond the legitimate interests of the educator (sexual self-concept, family self-concept, religious self-concept, etc.). It also indicates that

induced changes in one area do not affect self-concept in other areas (Lane and Muller, 1977). For example, adjusting academic self-concept in order to achieve self-descriptive accuracy is not likely to affect self-concept in other areas. Further, self-concept can be adjusted without disrupting or impeding learning if that adjustment is made in a supportive, non-judgemental atmosphere, free of induced stress (Sharp, 1977).

This model also asserts that self-concept is not the panacea for all educational woes. It denies such simplistic assertions as enhancing the positiveness of self-concept will solve achievement problems, resolve racial conflicts, increase positive social interaction, cause people to be more loving, and stop obscene phone calls in the middle of the night. Self-concept is an important skill, but is only one of many important skills with which educators must concern themselves.

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